BEFORE I ENTER BATTLE

I BEG YOUR FORGIVENESS

SHOULD I KILL TODAY, MAY THEIR SOULS BE READY FOR YOUR JUDGEMENT

AND SHOULD I FAIL...

I PRAY YOU WILL FIND ME WORTHY OF YOUR GRACE.

FOR YOURS IS THE KINGDOM AND THE POWER AND THE GLORY

FOREVER AND EVER

AMEN.

STEADY YOUR SOULS AND PREPARE TO SEND LORD VINCE'S HEATHENS TO GOD'S MERCY

EXECUTOR NASHTEK SPOKE OF GOD'S MERCY WITH THE SAME BREATH THAT HE USED TO SPEAK OF THE DEATH OF OUR ENEMIES.

COULD GOD TRULY FAVOR ANY SIDE IN BATTLE?

COULD OUR QUEST BE DIVINE IF IT CALLS FOR DEATH?

WE PREPARED TO ATTACK ONE OF LORD VINCE'S OUTPOSTS

INSIDE, WE HOPED TO FIND OUR CAPTURED QUEEN.

I'D HOPED SHE STILL LIVED, AS I FEARED ONLY SHE COULD HEAL OUR NATION TO SANITY WHEN THE CRUSADE ENDED

IT WORRIED ME THAT, TO EXECUTOR NASHTOK, THIS WAS NOT A FAVORABLE OUTCOME.

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST LORD VINCE'S TYRANNY WAS JUST.

BUT THE FORCIBLE INCLUSION OF SOME'S POLITICAL ASPIRATIONS WAS NOT

GOD WILLS IT

THE ORDER TO MARCH WAS GIVEN.

AS WE MOVED, I GLANCED TOWARD THE FIGURE ON THE MOUNTAIN ABOVE.

DESPITE BEING EXCOMMUNICATED, ERIC SOMETIMES JOINED THE BATTLE

THOUGH HE HAD LEFT ALL FAITH IN THE CHURCH, HE HARBORED SOME UNKNOWN GRUDGE WITH LORD VINCE

HE STOOD AGAINST THE TYRANT

BUT HE FOUGHT FOR HIMSELF

I HOPED HE WOULD HELP US

AS WE MOVED CLOSER, THE LACK OF OPPOSITION WORRIED ME.

SOON WE WERE CLOSE ENOUGH TO TOUCH THE MASSIVE DOORS.

AND THEY OPENED WITH NO RESISTANCE

THE OUTPOST SEEMED DESERTED...

AS THE OTHERS POURED IN BEHIND ME...

... I MOVED TO CHECK THE DINING HALL

PRAYER OF THE MANTIS

... AND I DISCOVERED WHAT HAD BECOME OF THE INHABITANTS OF THAT FORTRESS.

AS I STARED AT THE HORROR

EXECUTOR NASHTOK APPEARED BY MY SIDE.

BARBAROUS.

SURELY THIS IS THE WORK OF LUCIFER.

YOU'VE NEARLY HIT UPON IT, MY LORD, THOUGH THIS IS NOT THE DEVIL'S WORK. IT IS MEANT TO ATTRACT HIS ATTENTION.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW OF THIS?

I'VE SEEN THIS BEFORE. YOUR CRUSADE HAS MADE LORD VINCE PANIC. HE NOW EXPLORES THE DARK ARTS TO GAIN ADVANTAGE OVER YOUR ARMIES. ONLY IN A ROOM COVERED WITH FRESH FLESH CAN DOORWAYS TO HELL BE MADE. IF SUCH A PLACE TRULY EXISTS.

HOW COULD THEY DO THIS TO THEMSELVES?

NOT JUST THEMSELVES UNLESS LORD VINCE HAS BEGUN RECRUITING INFANTS

THEY MURDERED PRISONERS TO CREATE THIS DEVILISH ROOM? THEN OUR QUEST FOR OUR LOST QUEEN ENDS HERE.

A FAVORABLE OUTCOME FOR YOU. NOW THE WAR CAN CONTINUE INDEFINITELY.

SIR ERIC LED THE WAY UP THE SPIRAL STAIRCASE

I FOLLOWED CLOSE BEHIND PRAYING THAT, BY SOME MIRACLE, THE QUEEN STILL LIVED

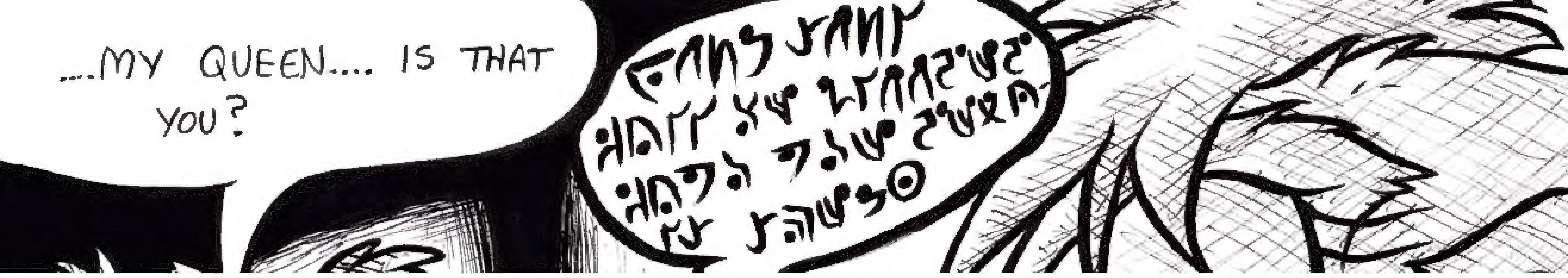
MY PRAYERS WERE ANSWERED IN PART, AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRWAY WE FOUND OUR LOST QUEEN.

I WOULD LATER LEARN THAT HER BODY HAD BEEN "REWORKED"

TURNED INTO A DISGUSTING HORROR

REVERTED TO A FERAL STATE

NEITHER LIVING NOR DEAD


....MY QUEEN.... IS THAT YOU?